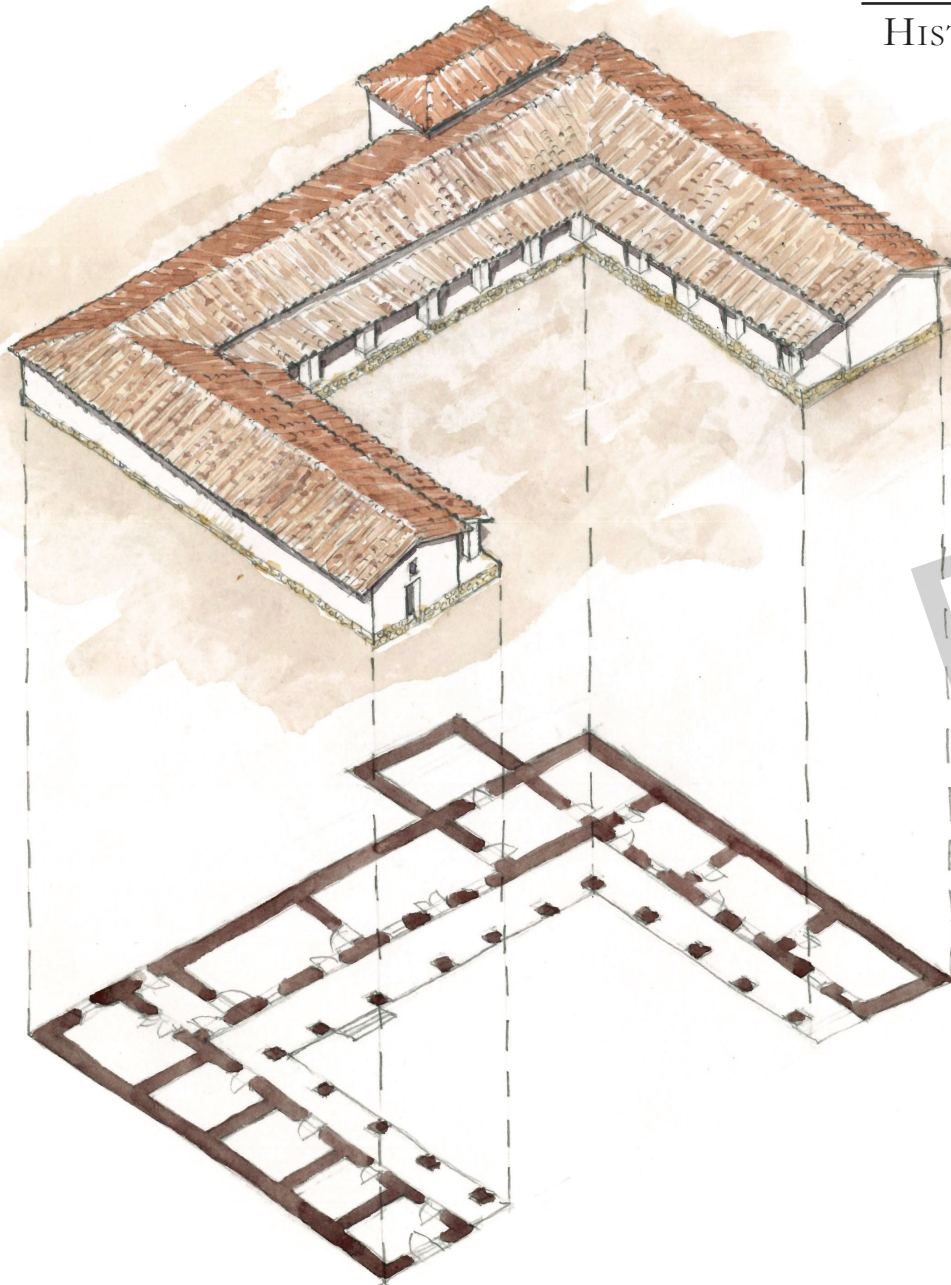


ADOBE

HISTORIC RESOURCES • SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA



DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

From the late 1700s to the early 1800s, Santa Barbara was considered to be on the outer edge of the Spanish colonies. Due to the dry climate, there were very few trees in Santa Barbara and as a sparsely populated territory, skilled craftsmen were few and far between. This meant that nearly all of the architecture was constructed of the simple, yet effective adobe method of construction. Adobe was made of sand, clay, water and straw, forming it into rectangular bricks, then sun drying the bricks and stacking them to build thick walls. The adobe brick walls were then covered with a layer of plaster for water-protection. The final result was two to three foot thick white walls, with an undulating finish that hinted at the adobe bricks beneath.



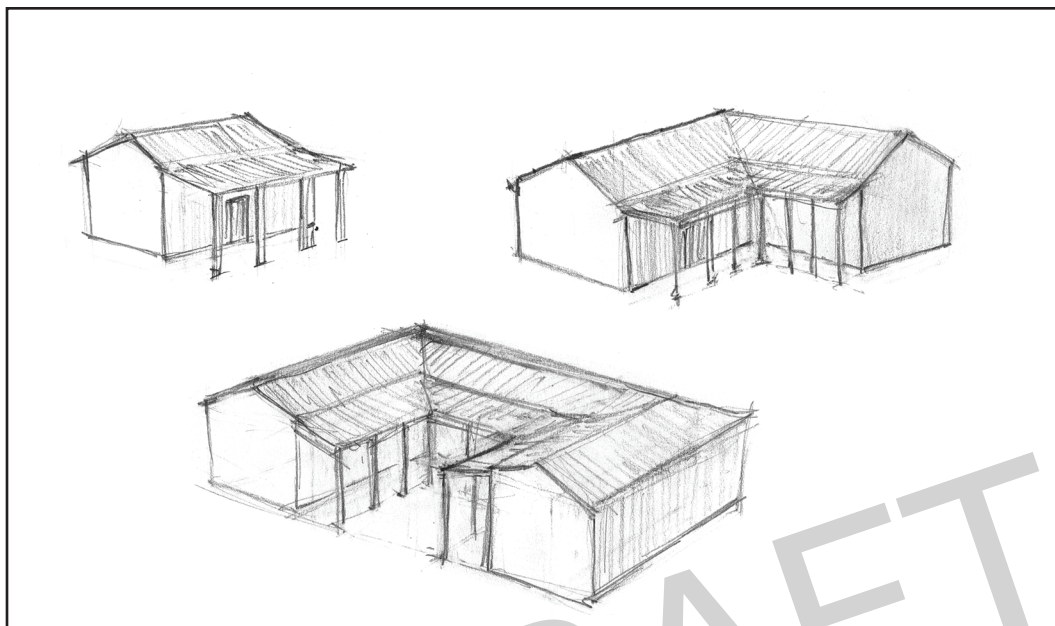
The thick walls of this adobe are covered with white plaster that gives it an undulating finish that hints at the adobe bricks underneath.



The Casa De La Guerra Adobe was constructed in 1828 and features massive adobe columns on the portale.

HISTORY

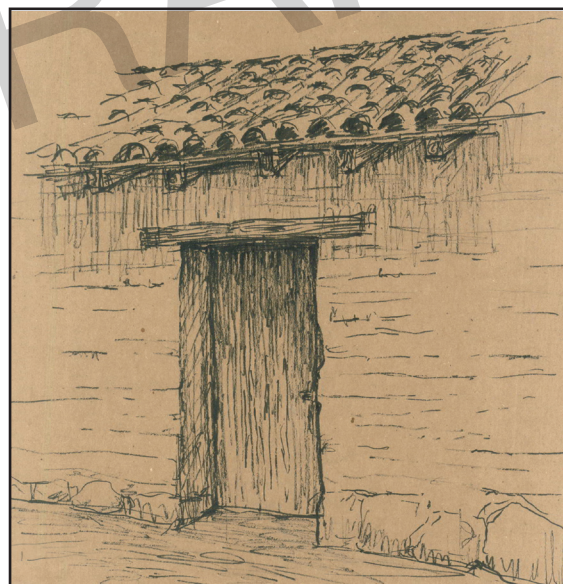
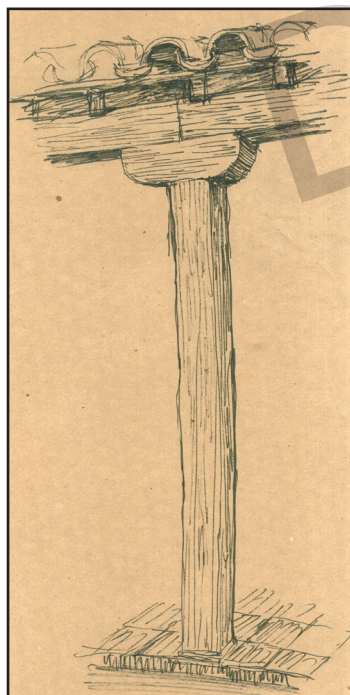
Adobe construction was introduced to California by the Spanish in 1769. Almost every Spanish presidio, pueblo and mission was made up almost exclusively of adobe buildings. These buildings were also used later on during the Mexican and Early American Periods of California. Adobe buildings are some of the oldest buildings in California. They serve as important links to California's past as a colony of Spain, a province of Mexico, and during early statehood. Adobe constructed buildings of the Spanish Colonial era have been a fundamental part of Santa Barbara identity for over 200 years. Seeing the adobe structures of Santa Barbara when he visited in 1793, the explorer and English naval officer George Vancouver commented that it was "far more civilized than any of the other Spanish establishments...The buildings appeared to be regular and well constructed, the walls clean and white, and the roofs of the houses covered with a bright red tile."



MASSING & OVERALL FORM

Part of the strength of the early adobe Spanish Colonial architecture in California comes from a simplicity of form. Usually comprised of a simple gable with a covered porch kicked to one side, the adobe house was expanded room by room as needed by either continuing the gable in a straight line or by wrapping the house into an L or U shaped plan enclosing an inner courtyard. In general, most early Spanish Colonial structures in Santa Barbara were single story, since they were built of large adobe bricks which required a large thickness for a relatively low wall height.

The main roof was usually pitched at around 4:12, with the covered porch (portale) at a lower slope. This provided a large, shaded area to work or rest in front of each dwelling.



CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES

Foundation: The foundation was usually of stone, giving the buildings a strong, waterproof base.

Roof, Cornice and Eave Details: The roof rafters were round beams or vigas, which had reeds placed between them to provide support for the red clay roof tiles above.

Porches: Long narrow porch called a portale with wood or adobe posts making an arcade. The portale often lined the inner courtyard of the house.

Porch Columns: Made of massive heavy, square wood timbers with wood brackets above or massive square columns made of adobe.

Doors: Doors were typically solid wood planks with thick wood trim or a heavy wood lintel above the opening.

Windows: Windows were deeply recessed with thick unpainted wood trim or a heavy wood lintel above the opening with small panes of glass. Windows often had bars of iron or wood called rajas to allow the windows to be open for ventilation while still keeping the room secure.

Wall Materials: Thick adobe walls covered with a layer of plaster.

Lights: Lights were made of simple ironwork.

Chimney: Massive square columns made of adobe, usually on the gable end of the adobe.



This adobe features porch posts made of thick wood timber. The door and window feature thick, unpainted trim.



A decorative wrought iron rajas covers the wood window.



The long, narrow porch shows the underside of the roof featuring roof rafters that have reeds placed between them to provide support for the red clay roof tiles above.